



May 13, 2009

MICHIGAN

DENTAL

HYGIENISTS'

ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY TO APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

***By: Bonnie Nothoff RDH, Director Governmental
Affairs***

Good morning Representative Cushingberry and members of House Appropriations. My name is Bonnie Nothoff, I am a registered dental hygienist in the state of Michigan and represent the Michigan Dental Hygienists Association. There are 10,000 registered dental hygienists in our state, licensed professionals who have embarked on being part of the solution to dental health care problems in our state. As a result of legislation passed in 2005, (P.A. 161), many hygienists have begun programs that provide care to the under served. To date there are 62 programs in our state not one of which is identical to the last, but all of which are WORKING to provide care to the under served, dramatically reduce costs and most significantly to alleviate pain in these populations.

With the recent executive order adult dental Medicaid was cut from the budget. That will halt the 62 programs on the P.A. 161 books. Mr. Chairman, we believe adult dental Medicaid was cut because it has been described as an "optional" Medicaid benefit. Preventive dental care cannot be "optional." Preventive dental care and adult dental Medicaid must be considered Primary Care. We know this is so because the statistics show us the results of prevention rather than emergency room intervention.

We have come so far with these programs; served so many by providing dedicated professionals in our state, willing to accept the Medicaid reimbursement, who now must turn thousands and thousands of people away and point them, not in the direction of a dental home; not in the direction of good oral health, but instead to the emergency room for an extraction.

Mr. Chairman, members, we believe this could be altered with one word in the description stated in the executive order and that is "optional." The Surgeon General in 2000 stated the connection between oral health and total health. We know how to make prevention work in Michigan. It is working now. Please take a moment to look at the programs working all over our state. Please reconsider adult dental Medicaid and reinstate now. We are happy to show you how well this program works and implore you to act on this very important reinstatement. Thank you.

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PUBLIC HEALTH DENTAL DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAM - PA 161

10/21/2008 Rev. 5/6/2009

Agency

Alcona Health Center
Bailey, Jennifer
Care Free Medical and Dental
Center for Family Health - Jackson
Cherry Street Clinic
Childrens Dental Health Foundation, Farmington Hills
Children's Hospital of Michigan- Dental Dept.
Dept. of Corrections, Region II
Dept. of Corrections; Region III
Dept. of Corrections, Region I
Dentists R Us/Healthy Smiles
Family Health Center of Battle Creek
Family Medical Center of Michigan
Fountain Clinic, Calhoun County
Healthy Smiles (Dentists R Us)
Health Delivery Incorporated, Saginaw
Ingham County Health Department - Healthy Smiles
Ingham County Health Department - Adult Clinic
InterCare Community Health Department
Loving Hands Clinic
Kalamazoo Health Department
Marquette County Health Department
Michigan Community Dental Clinics, Inc.
Meadow Brook Nursing Home
Traverse City Youth & Wellness
West Branch
Alpena
Cadillac
Cheyboygan
Mancelona
Gaylord
Traverse City
Three Rivers
Dowagiac
Hartford
Manistee
Marquette
Petoskey
East Jordan
Smiles on Wheels
Mid Michigan District Health Department
Monroe County Health Department
Mott Children's Health Center
Muskegon Family Care
Northwest Michigan
Ottawa County Health Department
St. Clair County Health Dept.
Telemon Corporation (Mohan Parfitt)
Tri City Family Dentistry
Traveling Tooth
Univ. of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry
Tooth Time
Wholesome Smiles
Washtenaw Children's Dental Clinic*
Washtenaw Co Head Start